FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER

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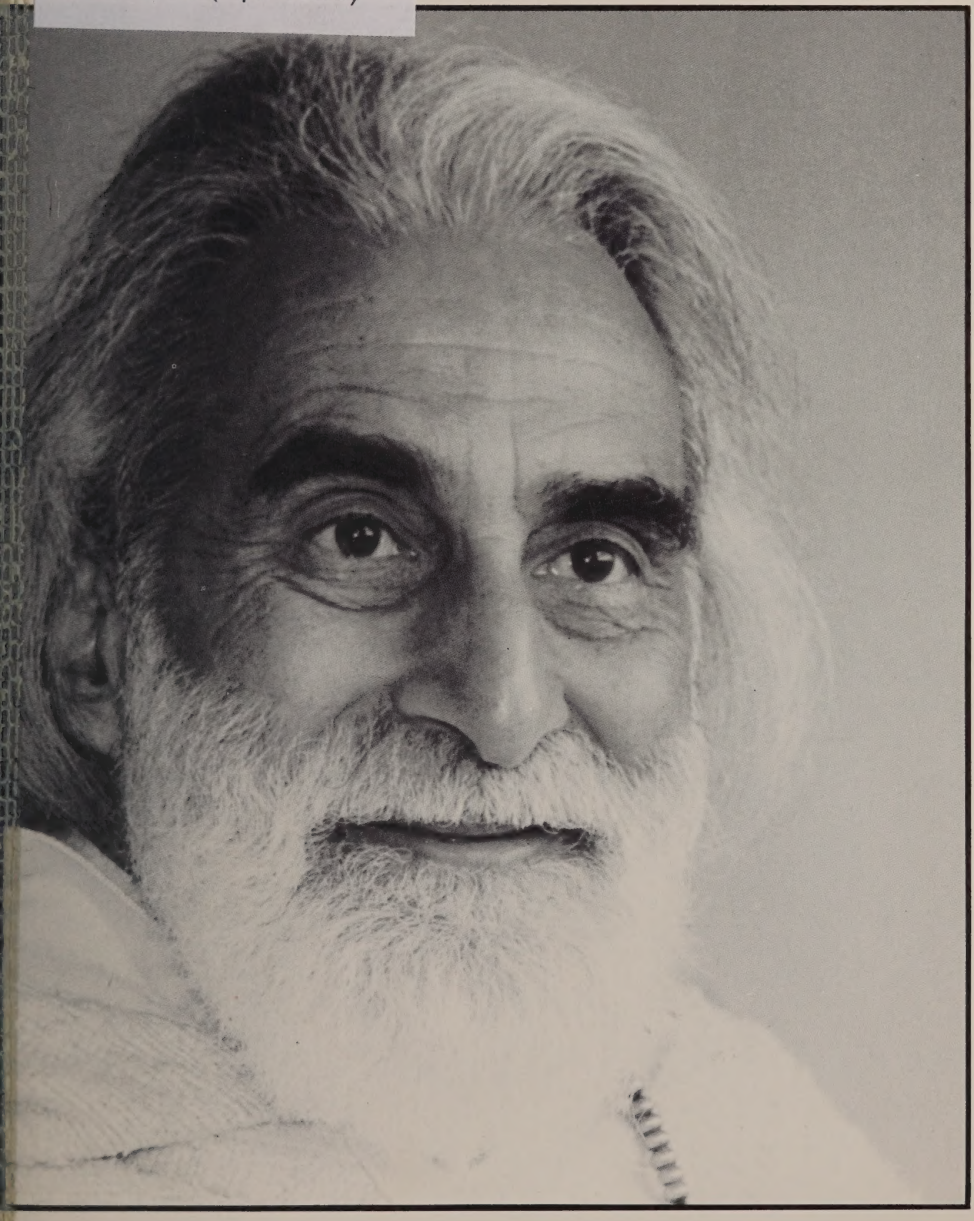

The purpose of Fellowship in Prayer is to promote the practice of prayer among all religious faiths whose fundamental belief is in God regardless of race, creed, or color, and whose tenets include the universal attributes of truth, honesty, justice, and mercy, that thereby there may arise a closer relation to Almighty God and a deeper spirit of fellowship among mankind.

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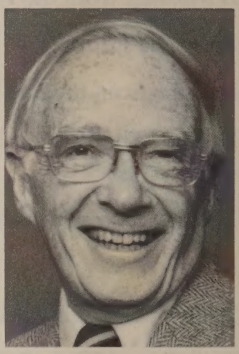


A while back I attended a major conference in one of New York City's largest hotels on "Conscious Aging: A Creative and Spiritual Journey." An impressive array of specialists spoke on practical issues of health, finances, and other realities of the elder years.

But the presentations that packed the huge main auditorium to overflowing—those given by Pir Vilayat Khan, Ram Dass, and Jungian analyst Marion Woodman, for example—were those devoted to the spirituality of aging.

In a society obsessed by youth and achievement, elders, for whom acquiring power, wealth and status is no longer a matter of ultimate concern, often feel ignored and useless. Yet later maturity, despite the often painful physical, social and psychological losses that accompany the aging process, can be a time for great spiritual growth. As "wounded healers" elders have perhaps their most important contributions yet to make: to themselves, to each other, and to their children and grandchildren who will inherit this poisoned and polluted planet.

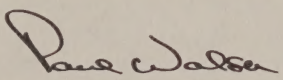
Free from the demands and constraints of social and family pressures and concerns about what "others" may think or say about us, we have the opportunity to make a long-delayed inner journey back to the center of our true self. At long last, we can respond fully and lovingly to the still unsatisfied promptings of our heart, whose true nature is love and whose desire is to serve God by serving others.

The ability to make this shift in priorities and values, to transform the upward surge of youthful desires and energies into the flowering of love and service, requires the development of a religious outlook—a profound faith in the ultimate goodness of creation that calls for more, not less, concern for and commitment to the well-being of all around us and of life itself.

For many of us, that outlook comes through prayer and meditation. The inward journey in search of our true self also helps reveal the particular path of service that is right for us; one that leads to personal fulfillment and uses our talents, experience and wisdom to maximum advantage in the service of humanity.

Prayer and meditation, alone and with others, can open our hearts to the transcendent experience of the indwelling divinity at the center of our being. Through this experience we become re-acquainted with the innate, loving kindness and healing compassion that are our true nature, but that may have been clouded over by the turbulence of our more outwardly active years. Instead of always trying to make things happen we now begin to allow them to happen. It's like waiting quietly and patiently for the sediment in a pitcher of cider to sink to the bottom, leaving a crystal clear liquid to refresh and nourish those who are thirsty.

The practice of prayer and meditation, with the ever-deepening faith and hope it brings in the face of the deterioration of the physical body, in no way implies a passive withdrawal from life. Teilhard de Chardin, talking about the "divinization" of our diminishments through faith, urged us to "collaborate passionately in the human effort" to the very end, in whatever ways are open to us, in the certainty that every act of kindness, of love, and of service to others resounds throughout the universe and reverberates through eternity.



Paul Walsh

With more and more men meeting in small groups throughout the United States today to discuss their inner lives, especially their emotional lives, no topic emerges more frequently than the father-son relationship. In honor of the burgeoning "men's movement" and the longing of men in our time to develop spiritually and emotionally, this issue of *Fellowship in Prayer* celebrates a remarkable father and son who will long be remembered as two of the twentieth century's spiritual giants, Hazrat Inayat Khan and Pir Vilayat Inayat Khan.

Hazrat Inayat (pronounced in-EYE-at), Khan was born in Baroda, India, in 1882 to a family of great musicians and became himself a master musician. At an early age he was initiated by his Sufi teacher, Abu Hashim Madani, who instructed him to "unite East with West in the harmony of your music." He left India in 1910 to bring the Sufi Message to the West and died in 1927 after a highly influential ministry—though of only 17 years—in India, Europe, and the United States.

Shortly before his death, Hazrat Inayat Khan initiated his ten-year-old son, Vilayat (vil-EYE-at) Inayat Khan, as his spiritual successor. Today Pir Vilayat (Pir means teacher), the head of the Sufi Order in the West, has won worldwide fame as an accomplished and inspiring spiritual teacher.

Just what is Sufism? Hazrat Inayat Khan calls it "the religion of the heart." More an outlook on life and a way of being in the world than a set of beliefs or rituals, Sufism promotes the awakening of men and women to the presence of God—to divinity in the self, the other, the earth and in every facet of human endeavor and enterprise. Members of the Sufi Order undergo a rigorous program of spiritual training to bring about a deep personal transformation and commitment to helping others in the life of love. Sufis make a special effort to practice their high ideals in the context of the real world and to remain responsive to the actual needs and traumas of the human community.

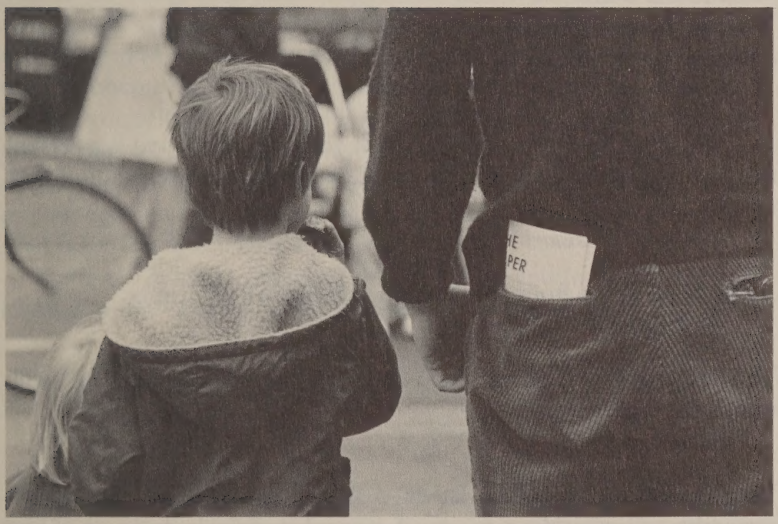
The core of the Sufi message appears in a passage of great beauty written by Pir Vilayat about his father's legacy:

> The greatest force that moves people in the world (is) the power of ecstasy. We all know that there are some moments when we are low-key, when there is a lack of magnetism of the soul. Nothing turns us on, life is very drab or dull and doesn't seem to make sense. We can't be interested in anything or muster enthusiasm for anything, because

the magnetism is running low. (My father) would say this is because we have either fallen out of love with the only Being one ever loves—who is God—or have never been touched by the magic of love, which is the magic that transforms a being altogether. The magic of love is that the one who is in love makes everyone else be in love. And here was (my father), making us be in love—but also making us awaken from the illusion of love and realizing that the one we really love is God.

This moving tribute by a son to a deeply loved father kindles the hope that as more and more men meet and share their experience, the masculine spirit will reach its full flowering in the father-son relationship—and transform the world.

Mary Ford-Grabowsky



We can only know God by loving. . . . It seems easy at first: how could anyone not love all that is beautiful and wonderful? We soon learn that this is like loving a person for the beauty of their face, which is not loving, but admiring. The path of love is a path for the madmen and madwomen who are prepared to be thwarted in this, the most sacred thing in the world. The power behind which the whole universe revolves is the power of love. We know love as liking people, as passion, as compassion; we know it in tenderness, in kindness, in friendship, and in many other manifestations and expressions. But if you could ever reach love in its unadulterated, overwhelming reality, it would shatter you.

Pir Vilayat Inayat Khan

I walk without feet and fly without wings, and see without eyes and hear without ears.

Shems Tabrizi

Walk to the well.
Turn as the earth and the moon turn,
circling what they love.

Rumi

Behold the world entirely comprised in yourself. The world is a person and a person is a world. The heart of a barley seed conceals a hundred harvests.

Mahmud Shabistari

Allah has said, ask from Me through mentioning my names.

Hadis Qudsi

Thou playest this game of Thou and I that at the end all "I's" will realize the oneness of "I."

Rumi

I was very young when [my father] passed away—I was ten-years-old. I remember receiving the telegram. I couldn't believe it. It was as if my whole world had been shattered—had come to en end. I didn't think it was possible to live without him. I couldn't believe that I wouldn't see him again.

Pir Vilayat Inayat Khan

Ecstasy: The Way of the Sufi

PIR VILAYAT INAYAT KHAN

The view from the top of a mountain. Bach's B Minor Mass. The experience of asking forgiveness. According to a great Sufi teacher, these moments of life-fully-lived can overcome suffering and bring about deep peace.

Everyone is in some kind of state of intoxication, but there are different kinds of wine. Some people like *vin ordinaire*, some like Chateauneuf du Pape, and some prefer champagne. When you were a child, you were intoxicated by your toys. You couldn't sleep if you didn't have your doll or your teddy bear. Then, when you grew up, you gave up that kind of intoxication and sought other forms of intoxication, like being in love, or studying music, or wanting to learn something about whatever interested you. There are lots of intoxications people can be subject to: football, stamp collecting, skiing, hang gliding—in fact, the whole of life is intoxicating. We can't live on bread alone, we need wine—something that is really meaningful to us, that will really turn us on, that will give us zest to galvanize all our energy. The worst thing that could happen to you is to be low-key—when there's nothing that turns you on. Ecstasy is always experienced in being carried beyond yourself, whether it's football, rock-and-roll, parachuting, mountain climbing, or whatever—it's something that carries you beyond yourself, an experience that is shattering to your notion of yourself. It might be challenging to your courage; it might be feeling a part of the whole of nature. Anything that makes you lose your confinement in your ego-consciousness and makes you feel part of something greater than yourself—that's what ecstasy is.

There are different situations that can bring you to it. For example, looking at the sunrise in the mountains, or the smile of a child, or

The head of the Sufi Order in the West, Pir Vilayat Inayat Khan is famous throughout the world for his writings, teaching, and retreats. Among his books are The Message in Our Time, Toward the One, *and* Sufi Masters. *His article, which is reprinted with the permission of Omega Publications, New Lebanon, NY, is from* The Call of the Dervish.

For information about Sufi retreats in your area, you are welcome to contact the Sufi Order Secretariat, Box 30065, Seattle WA 98103, (206) 782-2001. Sufi books may be ordered through Omega Publications, RD 1, Box 1030E, New Lebanon, NY 12125.

the experience of someone asking forgiveness of you or of you asking forgiveness of someone else: there are all things that will give you ecstasy. You are moved in the depths of your being; you are transformed by that experience. It may occur in an encounter with a wonderful being or the discovery of yourself in another being or the discovery of the presence of God. It's seeing meaningfullness where you didn't see it before, like a child looking at a puzzle. "Can you see that little pixie in the tree?" "No daddy, I can't see it." "Look again." "Yes—I can see it!" Eureka! That's the moment of ecstasy: when you see something you couldn't see before.

There are other forms of ecstasy, which my father, Hazrat Inayat Khan describes. For example, seeing the cause behind a situation; or realizing that your mind is the mind of God and that your understanding is something that's happening to the One Being; or discovering in yourself the power that moves the universe. Or, he says, you can "experience the condition of the spheres." What does that mean? It means feeling the power of life on the planet, or even beyond the planet if you're looking at the stars. It's discovering the life behind this whole scene of life, or the thought behind the whole scene, or the emotion behind the whole scene—the divine emotion behind everything that happens in the universe. The greatest ecstasy is discovering the divine emotion. For example, experiencing the emotion of Bach when he wrote his toccatas and fugues. You enjoy listening to the music, but can you imagine what emotion he experienced writing it? That's sharing in divine emotion.

There are things that are so powerful that you can never be the same after you've experienced them. This is the way of the Sufi: the way of ecstasy. It's being carried beyond your emotion into an emotion that is cosmic, a divine emotion. It's exactly the opposite of being low-key. The strongest thing that can ever happen to you is to be infused with the ecstasy of a being. Ecstasy is contagious, and it's the greatest gift there is. What greater gift can you give people than to confer ecstasy upon them? It's like a *hostia*—a divine host that is handed to you. I remember once having heard that the B Minor Mass of Bach was being played in a church in Paris; as usual, I had a lecture, but I tried to catch the end of it. I was too late. But it was unbelievable just to see the people who were leaving and rushing into the subway: you could see that they were all caught up in the ecstasy of what they had experienced.

We must not confuse ecstasy with joy, although it sounds very much like it. It's something else: there's a combination of joy and pain in it. It's the joy that arises out of a broken heart. One has to have known suffering to be able to know joy, and what is more, one must be able to continue to experience suffering while experiencing joy. Otherwise it's too unreal. Just enjoying things leaves something out. It's the combination of joy and suffering that makes for ecstasy. That's why the Sufi uses the words *fana* and *baqa*—annihilation on the one hand, and on the other re-creation in the divine consciousness. They call it subsistence. It's the story of the priest in the concentration camp who had been beaten and who experienced a greater ecstasy than ever before when he celebrated his mass. It's Jesus among the Romans.

In fact, (my father), Hazrat Knayat Khan speaks of ecstasy as experiencing God's suffering from the limitation in which God has to function on the earth plane. It's that moment when you're captured by the limitation of circumstances and it doesn't take away your sense of the divine perfection. You can keep your head high when you're being

There are things that are so powerful that you can never be the same after you've experienced them.

humiliated, for example: you experience the divine perfection in the middle of limitation instead of identifying yourself with your personality. It's very strong; in fact, I would say that the only thing that helps one to stand pain is to experience it as the crucifixion of God that you are partaking of.

Hazrat Inayat Khan says, "Those who are given liberty by God to act freely are nailed on the earth; and those who are free to act as they choose on the earth will be nailed in the heavens." It's paradoxical, like his saying that "Divinity is human perfection and humanity is divine limitation." It's always paradoxical: when you think you understand, you really don't. That's why they say that the Sufi is wrecked in his body, his mind is blown, and his heart is broken—that's why he's so full of joy; and his soul is wrecked, and that's why he's so full of self-confidence; he becomes pure spirit. That's ecstasy. I imagine Christ must have experienced an incredible ecstasy on the cross, as he appears in that statue that shows him dancing on the cross. That really says it:

Cliff Moore

the victory of the human spirit over the tribulations of the human condition gives ecstasy. It's the victory of the soul against the fiasco of circumstances. It's the opposite of having success in circumstances and losing your soul, as Christ said.

If everything goes right, and you're celebrating because you've become the president of your club, or whatever, that's the worst thing that could happen to you, whereas being jubilant when everything breaks down around you is the most wonderful thing that could happen to you. That's the victory in the middle of the fiasco. And that's the condition of the Sufi: you sees everything breaking down and are so jubilant as it breaks down. There was a lady who came to me and said, "Everything in my life has broken down." I was in a flippant mood, and I said to her, "Best thing that could happen to you." She was really insulted. I didn't mean it as an insult; I felt, that's enough to really give you courage in life, I hope. It's what my father calls the loss that avers itself to be a gain and the gain that avers itself to be a loss.

So the ecstasy of the Sufi—the intoxication of the Sufi—comes from a particular type of wine. The great Sufi poet Hafiz said, "If those pious ones of long robes listen to my song, they will immediately begin to get up and dance . . . Forgive me, O pious ones, for I am drunk just now!" The dervish says, "If I can't dance, what can I do?" Intoxication is a state in which one participates in the dance of Shiva—and yet the highest intoxication, curiously enough, is sobriety. That's peace instead of joy. Can you imagine what the intoxication of peace is? The state of Buddha, for example: it's the highest emotion. He said that it's like a sword that cuts through the air and is so strong that nothing can touch it. Peace is the strongest thing there is.

That is a state in which one has overcome all things. It's a particular quality of thinking: you realize that everything is just the way it should be. It's strange, because normally you see all the cruelty and the disasters happening, and you can't say that things are the way they should be. It's very strange to have this outlook that you get at a certain level of realization, when you realize that it has to be the way it is. You begin to understand it. That's the reason for the words of both Christ and Buddha at the end of their lives: "It is fulfilled," and "That which had to be done has been done."

This understanding gives you the incentive to go ahead. You feel that there's this to do and that to do, and if you didn't have the

Janet Kerr

incentive you wouldn't do anything. If you have incentive, it's because behind you there is the divine motivation—the sense of fulfillment that is like the horizon beyond your own horizon. One always thinks that the purpose is at the end, like the horizon toward which you are moving. It's very difficult to understand that the purpose is already fulfilled. It's fulfilled beyond time. That's difficult to understand because we think in terms of time, but in fact the fulfillment of the divine plan is already there, but beyond time—in the infinity of time in the future.

That is the point of view that gives you peace. Otherwise, you are motivated by nostalgia—always longing for that which is not. It is difficult to understand that in God there should be the nostalgia, which is the motivation behind everything that is happening in the course of evolution, and at the same time the satisfaction of knowing that it's all right as it is because it's all already fulfilled. It's like thinking of God as being static and dynamic at the same time, and it is hard to understand. But that is the reason why there are moments when you experience an extraordinary intoxication—when you feel free in yourself, when you feel detached. Nothing can touch you, nothing can affect you, you're free from yourself. That's the moment of sobriety: there's no more longing, there's no more nostalgia, there's no more division. That is what is called *moksha*—liberation—and that is the purpose of Buddhism. There are cycles in our lives: there are moments when there's motivation to reach up to a certain point, and there are moments when you reach the *kemal* state, which is the state in which everything is perfect as it is.

Finally, we want to make a distinction between euphoria and ecstasy. This is a distinction many people can't make. Euphoria is a form of excitement that is intoxicating, like going to a football game and getting all excited: that's euphoria, not ecstasy. We might call euphoria the lowest form of ecstasy. The highest ecstasy is the state of sobriety. Between the two there are all kinds of stages; just as each person stands in life in the place corresponding to their degree of realization, each person is in life in accordance with the kind of wine they enjoy, which means the quality of ecstasy that one really seeks. There are some people who seek vulgar ecstasy. Others seek a very refined and sublime form of ecstasy. It's a matter of evolution. You can't change a person; in time, the person will change. People change in their sense of values, and you can see it in their manner, their way of dressing and their way of speaking, their way of moving and sitting, the type of music they like, and

the house they like to live in. You can see the way a person is by all these things. There's a time when people like frills and artificial things, and there are times when they can only stand genuine things. There is a time when you need the snow and the ice: you can't even stand lush flowers and fruit, because you must have something very austere. The same is true in music: sometimes you seek music that is really very austere, and sometimes you like opera. It's all a matter of attunement.

The Religion of the Heart

HAZRAT INAYAT KHAN

A great teacher and sage, the founder of the Sufi Order in the West, and father of Pir Vilayat Inayat Khan, Hazrat Inayat Khan wrote prophetically in the first quarter of this century of "The Coming World Religion." This religion would embrace all religions in the spirit of love.

If anybody asks what Sufism is, what kind of religion it is, the answer is that Sufism is the religion of the heart, the religion in which the thing of primary importance is to seek God in the heart of humanity.

There are three ways of seeking God in the human heart. The first way is to recognize the divine in everyone and to be considerate toward every person with whom we come in contact, in our thought, speech and action. Human personality is very delicate. The more living the heart, the more sensitive it is; but that which causes sensitiveness is the love-element in the heart and love is God. The person whose heart is not sensitive is without feeling. That heart is not living; it is dead. In that case the divine Spirit is buried in the heart.

The one who takes notice of the feelings of another person with whom one comes in contact practices the first essential moral of Sufism.

The next way of practicing this religion is to think of the feelings of someone who is not with one at the moment. One may feel for those who are present, but one often neglects to feel for someone who is out of sight. One speaks well of someone to his or her face, but it is better to speak well of them when they are absent. One sympathizes with the trouble of someone who is with one at the moment, but it is more praiseworthy to sympathize with one who is far away.

The third way of realizing the Sufi principle is to recognize in one's own feeling the feeling of God, to realize every impulse of love that rises in one's heart as a direction from God, to realize that love is a

Hazrat Inayat Khan, (1882-1927), is the founder of the Sufi Order in the West. Among his books are The Inner Life and the Purpose of Life *and the 12-volume series,* The Sufi Message of Hazrat Inayat Khan.

Hazrat Inayat Khan

divine spark in one's heart, to blow that spark until a flame may rise to illuminate the path of one's life.

The Sufi message is the message of the day. It does not bring theories or doctrines to add to those already existing and which puzzle the human mind. What the world needs today is the message of love, harmony and beauty, the absence of which is the only tragedy of life. The Sufi message does not give a new law; it awakens in humanity the spirit of brotherhood and sisterhood, with tolerance on the part of each for the religion of the other, with forgiveness from each for the fault of the

other. It teaches thoughtfulness and consideration, so as to create and maintain harmony in life; it teaches service and usefulness, which alone can make life in the world fruitful, and in this lies the satisfaction of every soul.

The Sufi message is the answer to the cry of humanity today; for it is in agreement with science and it stands in defense of all religions. Our movement renders service to God and humanity, without any intention of forming an exclusive community, but of uniting in this service people of all different religions. It is the world message, and the religion which will be the religion of the whole of humanity; a religion which does not distract the mind of any person from his own faith, but makes it more firm, more enlightened, more sympathetic to his own religion. It is a religion which teaches tolerance towards the faith of another; a religion which opens the heart to words of wisdom, no matter what direction they come from. This is not only a church, but a school in which to learn a lesson, the lesson of tolerance; to learn to revere all teachers and to respect all scriptures; a lesson which teaches us that we need not give up our own religion, but that we should embrace all religions.

Fire Tongued

For Uriah John Miller, seasoned
seventeen years now, newly bearing
the spirit & new name of Juan de Yepes
and confirmed by God now
this Pentecost: this plenty-costly
Freed spirit of a man, confirmed.

That hovering breath, you ask?
That, believe it, is God's, Uriah,
No, not God's spirit like some thing owned,
something . . . possessed—
it *is* God, live!
See it? Stronger than
    water
steadier than blood
    of flesh, grained,
hotter than oil, tanning,
smarter than any handslap waking
    a tanned, glib face ("thanks, pal,
    I needed that . . ").
See? This Spirit's got guts, to call.

"What call," you wonder, on and on.
"What call of what Spirit . .
You mean that hint of . . . that soft . . . breeze?"
Ah. Now you're getting it.
Yeah. That's the tease, Uriah, that
whisper-wind untouchable . . . teasing, teasing,
Uriah. That's the call.
That tender, tough
becoming lovecall of The One
  firming your love,
  confirming you, Uriah,
as God's owned Self.

Daniel J. Rogers

A Roman Catholic priest, poet, and former college professor, Rev. Dan Rogers is presently chaplain at Mount Loretto Convent in Dubuque, IA.

I Believed

I believed
A sign on our foreheads
The bird kisses froth
A murmur in our hearts
The blue earth the golden earth
And your eyes radiate through my face

I believed
A star dies on our foreheads
I am the mournful azure
Your face fades feature by feature

Farewell
Chirp of a bird

I loved
And I am shadow
Opposite after the winter
A friend glimpsed
The word the algae crushed by good manners
Is deployed
And tears apart
Only eyes exhale a spirit

Lisa Boscane

A contemplative in the Poor Clare Monastery, Nice-Cimiez, France. Lisa Boscane is the author of numerous volumes of poetry. Some of her work has been translated into English by Dr. Mary T. McCarthy, RSM, professor of French, Georgian Court College, Lakewood, NJ.

I Came Toward the Sea

I came toward the sea
it awaits me
with its violent flow its whispered kiss
its pursuit of harmony its Source my desire
a little time yet
I'll close my eyes the eyes will immerse
my heart of stone
Lisa Boscane

Here I Am

Here I am
In my race toward you
I am the azure and in my hands the immense golden Sun
You will come into the world by night

You are there
Present elsewhere

Pines murmur a tenderness unknown
In the voluptuous fragrance of genista and thyme!

I was the bride I was the azure
Here is Solitude
Lisa Boscane

Heart's Hearing

O Beloved
let me sift
all sound
till what resounds
is silence.
Mary S. White

Heart's Song

My Heart Can't
sing in words.
It resounds
in the silence
that defends
the entire Universe!

A prolific poet since childhood, Mary White has published in journals like Alive Now. *She resides in Chapel Hill, NC.*

You Are Enough

ANN W. YOUNG

Rev. Ann Young, a Presbyterian minister and psychotherapist in Little Rock, AR, recently wrote to Fellowship in Prayer *as follows:*

> *I was so taken with the imagery of the Celtic Prayer that you published in your April, 1992, issue that I was moved to write. I re-typed the prayer at the beginning of my article for the visual effect as well as content. Thank you for the richness you bring into my life on a regular basis.*
>
> *Here is her lovely response to our Celtic Prayer.*

YOU ARE ENOUGH
As the rain hides the stars,
as the autumn mist hides the hills,
as the clouds veil the blue of the sky,
so the dark happenings of my lot
hide the shining of Your face from me.
Yet, if I may hold Your hand in the darkness,
it is enough.
Since I know that though I may stumble in my going,
You do not fall.

Traditional Gaelic Prayer

It's a spring rain that hides the sun and the blue of the sky today. It's cool for the season, dark and clammy. A day when one could easily feel God's own face hidden as well. It's a day when one longs to feel the touch of a friend, to hold hands in the darkness. I long to see a face and hold a hand that has "skin on it."

I have a friend whose hand I hold now and again. It's comforting to hold hands with one so close, trusted. That touch is perhaps more intimate than an embrace or kiss, even. The two remain separate in their own identity, yet there is deep communion in that casual but far from impersonal touch of hands. The messages sent and received, without words: I care; you matter; it's safe here; we don't have to explain

Tom Dunham

things; we really know each other and count on the other's love; all is well, for touching like this, I'm not afraid at all, not even of death itself. These and many other little assurances are telegraphed in the clasping hands, often only barely touching- fingers lightly brailling the fingers of the other. We can even be talking of some distant concern, yet know in the touch that other messages are on the line as well. Walking along some path, such hands fall naturally together and in apparent silence, yet each knows the language shared is deeper than any spoken words could say. Such is the comfort and strength in holding hands.

But You, God. Holding hands? A bit presumptuous, to say the least! Yet...how might it be to feel even the slightest grazing of your hand against mine? Or even the back of your hand carefully brushing my cheek, like my skin-friend did on occasion. Would Your hand comfort, or, in careless thrust, wound, destroy? That same Hand strewed the stars across the black night, lighting the skies for eternity. That hand carved desert canyons in technicolor, and splashed sun-gold on recent tiny orioles lined up on the wire. That hand parted the Sea, and wounded Jacob's thigh. That hand held Peter on the waves, and calmed

the storm. That hand touched Mary's womb, and gave a child to die. Can such a hand adapt enough to grasp my insignificant one? Why, then would I never know fear again, or wonder who I was and why. Would I never question my call, nor let the jeers of some folks daunt my little efforts at reaching out for others, more hurting and lost than I? Would that hand tell me why loved ones hurt, and cancer comes, and life is measured? What tender messages would come through such a Hand as that, held gently round my trembling one?

The rain is pouring down, a grey veil closing off the world. It's cold and damp and lonely. Oh for that gracious Hand to hold in the darkness. It would be enough.

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Rock Ritual XI

ROBERT O'ROURKE

Here is a new Rock Ritual—the eleventh in a widely acclaimed series—by a poet who knows well "the wisdom of creation."

For many years I have held in reverence the Sioux tradition of praying daily to the four sacred directions:

The East - for knowledge, wisdom, new experience;

The South - fertility, growth, healing;

The West - meditation, forgiveness, spiritual discernment;

The North - strength, honesty, purity.

I have written of the four rocks placed in a circle outside my shop window: * a red rock representing the East and the dawn of each new day; a yellow rock symbolizing the warm Summer sun and the time of abundant growth; a black rock reflecting the dark, thunder clouds that bring forth rain; a white rock exemplifying the North and the cleansing power of snow. These symbols remind me to make space in my life for ritual-ceremony-going inward. Today a serendipitous event marked my litany of touching each rock. As I was about to place my hand on the black rock of the West I noticed a small, dark spot no bigger than a dot. The dot moved on eight legs. A spider! A baby. Only minutes from her silk-egg cocoon. I looked for an omen in this tiny creature of coincidence because I believe, as our Native American story-tellers have taught, there are "voices" in nature, even tiny spiders. According to a Hopi myth, Spider Woman taught the Hopi people how to weave. I have seen her tall-spiralling, red rock formation home in Canyon de Chelly, Arizona. As I watched and waited a Sioux saga told to me last Summer formed in my memory:

**Fellowship in Prayer*, December, 1991

Folk art carver, writer, poet, Bob O'Rourke makes his home close to nature in Colorado. Lisa Smith, whose illustration accompanies this article, is Director of the Squash Blossom Art Gallery in Aspen, CO.

Lis '93

> Iktome was a Spider Man and a messenger of bad news. He could speak any language, take many forms and travel with the wind. One day, long ago, he heard a sound coming from the great ocean in the East. A sound made by the boats of Washichu, "white people, "fat takers" because they would someday take the fat of this land. Iktome warned these Washichu would devour everything in their path: the clean air, the vast forests and prairies; the pure, flowing rivers; birds of the sky; fish and animals; even the people's belief in a Great Spirit! This Washichu race would place a dark, black hoop around this world and everything would change for the redman and all those not yet born. The ancient ones wondered if this bad (sica) hoop could ever be broken. Would the strange Washichu ever change? Iktome thought this might come in the far-away future. Perhaps someday these odd, new strangers might learn the wisdom of creation; would listen to what the trees, the grasses, the wind and rocks had to say. Until that time all beings under the sun would suffer. *Hetch etu* (It is so; amen).

My little black spider and her mythical ancestor, Iktome, evoke a profound sadness in my heart. But contained within his melancholic prophecy there is hope, an expectation that one day we will "learn the wisdom of creation." A Navajo chant points the way . . .

> The mountains, I become a part of it . . .
> The herbs, the fir tree, I become a part of it.
> The morning mists, the clouds, the gathering waters,
> I become a part of it.
> The wilderness, the dew drops, the pollen,
> I become a part of it.

Indigenous people everywhere have always understood the exquisite bond which connects human destiny as one with the earth. In response "the old ones" have walked gently and expressed their gratitude for the abundance and beauty of the land. Thomas Berry, a leader in the eco-spirituality movement, compares ancient attitudes with more contemporary views:

> This country was beautiful beyond compare when we first came . . . we swept across this globe in a kind of assault . . . killing species that took hundreds of years to evolve.

The native people looked with disbelief and despair at the greed and wanton destruction. Berry anticipates the day when we too will share

the sadness. "Then the scene will brighten and we will begin to do what needs to be done."

The time has come to restore Mother Earth to "become a part of it" and learn from mountains, wet lands, wolves, spotted owls, clouds, rivers, rain forests, whales, beaches, forests, people everywhere. Yes! even little, black spiders. Before it is too late

Too late!

Gone!

Cliff Moore

Life is A Gift

ANITA WHEATCROFT

When an older couple met with a younger couple and shared their fears about the future, all four experienced a significant shift in attitude.

Fellowship in Prayer invites you to submit the story of your own "transforming experience." You do not need to be a professional writer. Just send your story to the Editor, Fellowship in Prayer, 291 Witherspoon Street, Princeton, NJ 08542.

All persons face doubts about the future. One evening recently, Tim and Carrie, a pair of newly expectant parents from our church, came to talk with us. Distinctions of younger and older generations quickly melted away. As we sipped hot tea and snacked on cakes, we were warmed by the glowing fireplace and our friendship. They shared the chill of their fears, holding them out like cold hands to the fire's warmth. We understood and empathized. "The future haunts us all," my husband assured them, as it has many in every age. It haunts parents, expectant parents most of all. They fear for their children's futures far more than their own. We told them that along with thousands of new parents in the late fifties, we had faced many of these same anxieties.

Theirs were the usual doubts of expectant parents: Will our baby be all right? Will we be able to bear it if something goes wrong? They had more generalized doubts as well. These we too had known, and they exist today, of course, thirty years later: Is it right to bring a new baby into such a world as ours? What about problems of pollution, overcrowded cities, and the population explosion?

My husband and I realized as we talked that answers for us did not come from an intellectual conviction, but from divine hands that reach down and clasp your own. All this we tried to share with our young friends with all the conviction we had found. I said, "Somehow, once you trustingly put yourself into the hands of God by an act of faith you

A much published free-lance writer, Anita Wheatcroft lives in The Woodlands, Texas with her husband. Among her books are Expectant Parents and Promise to Joel.

Tom Dunham

find that many doubts and fears simply disappear or assume proper proportions." We sometimes, being human, distrust others or ourselves on the future! Although we question our own abilities in any new endeavor, we have found God grants us strength to do what we could never do alone. We could witness to this from our lives. Also, in our darker uncertainties about the future, we find unfailing strength in the ageless assurances of religious faith.

Reaching for the Bible, we took turns reading from John's Gospel and from Paul's Epistle to the Romans: "Lo I will be with you always" (Matthew 28.20); "Nothing can separate us from the Love of God" (Romans 8.39). We each added other remembered promises from Scripture. We are assured we can live with peace even in the uncertainty of our age.

Together that night in our conversation, the four of us dared admit and lay before each other and God our doubts about the future, for

ourselves and for our children. For Dick and for myself, this includes loving concern for a grandchild expected this spring. In the silence I lifted this unborn infant in prayer.

Prayer is answered even in the asking. Assurance came, for me and for each of us, clear, strong, and sure: *Life is a gift*! It is a gift on almost *any* terms, however uncertain the future may be. A gift that includes meaningful work and relationships of love and support. We pass it on to our children as a gift. It is through us that God gives life to our children. Entrusted to our care for a while, they are really God's creation. Their lives are in God's hands.

All this came out of that special conversation. Somehow the four of us strengthened and reassured each other. All felt and expressed it. By this time the crackling fire had turned to bright embers. There was magic in its glow, in our expectant silences and our silent prayers. Of course, for our young friends and ourselves, the challenge continues. Footholds of faith are never gained once and for all. Each bend in the road opens up new heights to climb, obstacles to overcome. If we ever think we have arrived at any final place, we delude ourselves and lose faith. Challenges must be worked through and victories regained over and over again. Repeatedly we are brought back to humble awareness of our dependence.

Each of the four of us remembers that night as a turning point. We shared our weakness, our dependency, and found that God gave us, through prayer and one another, new, indwelling Spirit, strength and hope.

Ask Angela

BARBARA ACKERMAN

Do you have a question of the heart or spirit that needs attention? Angela, our canine sage-in-residence, would love to help. Please write to her in care of FiP, 291 Witherspoon St, Princeton, NJ 08542, and she will give you her answer in our next issue.

Dear Angela,

Recently I received some bad news but didn't handle it as neatly as I might have. Do you ever have to deal with bad news yourself, and if so, do you have any thoughts to share with us about how we can cope effectively with it?

Thank you
Stiff Upper Lip

Dear Stiff Upper Lip:

Thank you very much for taking the time to write to me with such an important question. From time to time, each of us must deal with some kind of bad news. It would be helpful to all of us if we could learn how to absorb bad news with the least amount of fuss and muss and wear and tear.

Today in our society we expect people to cope stoically with bad news, and to do so quietly and calmly as well. Society wants us to be grown up, take it like a soldier, take it on the chin, and keep a stiff upper lip. This sounds like a pretty tall order for just one piece of bad news. I'm ready for a little nap myself just talking about it, let alone how I'd feel if I were in the thick of it.

Though the grown-up, stoic soldier method may have the collective Good-Housekeeping seal, it makes the absorption of bad news more arduous than it need be. Personally, I've tried the soldier method and I can testify that I've had little success with it.

Before we go any further, let's get some bad-news basics into our food bowls. Bad news is scary. It is okay to act appropriately. Bad news can make us feel young and vulnerable. If this is how we're feeling, there seems little point in hiding this truth from ourselves or others. Pretending to feel any other way than how we're feeling only leads to

Tom Dunham

bad dreams, tummy aches, headaches, and intense lonelies. Besides, pretending to be stoic uses up valuable energy you really need to cope with bad news in the first place. Do not ask yourself to handle the bad news like you were a ballerina. Expect to be a bit klutzy about it all. Allow yourself time to disappear from everything, including your bad news. Keep in mind that bad news provides opportunities to grow, flourish, rise to the occasion, and to be brave in the face of adversity even if you're doing it all in a klutzy, half-baked manner.

Many of you may be wondering about my own credentials concerning the assimilation of bad news. I am no stranger to it. An example? Suitcases. Nothing really good has ever happened to me soon after suitcases have appeared all over the place. Suitcases mean beloveds are leaving. Leaving me. Yikes!

For me, another piece of bad news is a ride in the family car. While other canines gleefully stick their heads out of opened windows, nothing decent has ever come from a ride in an auto. The car means pain, shots, vets, flea dips, being poked, prodded, sprayed, weighed, spayed, injected, rejected, and subjected to pullings, pokings, strokings, proddings, and other animals. The family car has never brought me to a temperate climate with fine cheese and good Cheerios. How does a growing guru successfully absorb bad news? Neither the car nor suitcases bring out the best in me. Just the real of me. I make no apology. After living through a "real me" episode, I feel more room in my body for the real me. I feel relief. My head gets cleared out of any thoughts I have concerning how grown up I think I am. How do I successfully assimilate bad news? I scamper from suitcase to suitcase, sniffing madly. I make a nest out of the folds of my blanket. I take to a secluded corner where I can remain unseen while I keep an eye on the proceedings. I bark fervently. This is an effective coping mechanism. Barking helps and heals. This is especially true since it has been scientifically proven that keeping bad news to yourself, all bottled up inside, is totally useless as a coping mechanism and can be hazardous to your health. Be on the lookout for safe- barking opportunities. They do exist. What other coping mechanisms do I use? I shake and quake, moan and groan. I whimper, whine, remain inconsolable and solitary. I will eventually emerge for cheese and chest rubs. I will always come up for air, water, and a head pat. There needs to be a balance when handling bad news. Balance helps and heals. I run around efficiently getting a lot of mindless chores

accomplished; chewing my toenails down really short might be one chore I do when I see suitcases. Sometimes frantic scampering makes things worse. I may just nestle down with a good bone or an old sock.

My friend Barbara says that there are places on the planet where people come together to share the bad news of one person. A whole village may gather together to weep and mourn. This sounds like a kinder, gentler way of coping with bad news—sharing it with others. When I received my big piece of bad news, the death of my friend Cappy, I spent a lot of time howling in the basement by myself. Though I felt I wanted to be alone, I would have appreciated the appearance of another howling presence down there with me. Is there anything else? Yes. In a pinch, sometimes I simply snooze away bad news. There is nothing wrong with using some pure, unadulterated escape routes away from bad news. Finally, I will do my own little Chicken Little dance which I dance for comfort, consolation, and courage. Here, I tippy-tap and clippy-clap as fast and as noisily as I can. I listen for the soothing sound of my own little toenails on the hardwood floor and twirl myself backward or in place.

For your easy reference, I leave you now with the Angela method for the assimilation of bad news.

Scamper urgently. Sniff fervently. Gaze woefully into a beloved face. Make a nest, take a rest, shake and quake.
Moan and grown. Growl, howl, whimper, and whine. Bark and yowl. Remain inconsolable.
Go into seclusion.
Declare a moratorium on bad news.
Keep a balance.
Share bad news with invited guests.
If you're gonna be scared, be scared.
Do your own little Chicken Little dance.
Get into your bad news.
Be bad news.

To all of you who will have to tangle with bad news, I hope my expertise in this area will be of some use to you. Hoping that all of your news is good.

Faithfully,
Angela

Blessings in the Here and Now

SIDNEY STAVE

An artist discovers over and over again in his experience the stream of love that "bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things"—and "never ends."

I've written the following experiences separately, much the way we view our lives. We rarely look at our lives and see the underlying stream, the current of continuity, that winds its way through the varied landscapes of our existence. We frequently create dams, isolating our experiences in a quagmire of self-centered consciousness. Yet, there are moments when we feel reverence and wonder at the great mystery of our cosmos. The incomprehensible size of the universe, the multiplicity of forms, the breathing of our breath, the miracle of life and death. At those moments we sense or feel a connectedness; we are not alone. In those times of connection, we open our hearts and become manifestations of love. This is the underlying stream; we live in it, are embodied in it and it is part of us. In other words, we live in God and God lives in us. Each of us is a spark of the Divine.

I was in the emergency room of the local hospital. My body was connected to monitors and oxygen. I had experienced strange sensations as though a part of the body had shut down. There was hardly a pulse and I hovered on the edge of passing out. When still at home, in the silence of mind and heart, I had started to recite the name of Sai Baba, a being who represents the God-force of Divinity for me. I continued this recitation going to and in the emergency room. I could hear all the sounds of this hospital crisis center, other patients, doctors and nurses, phones ringing, my doctor and my wife speaking. Yet, all this was a background to repeating of the name. Though silent it was like the resonance of a powerful symphony. I felt calm, unafraid, allowing the music of his name to fill my being. I realized there was something amiss in the body, that in fact it might die but, it did not really matter. Everything was in movement. The sounds, feelings, thoughts all intermeshed, pulsations of light-energy, interpenetrating. Nothing was separate; it was like one small moving galaxy in the great activity of the

An artist and writer, Sidney Stave studies the teachings of Eastern and Western mystical religions. He resides in Salinas, CA.

universe. I looked at my wife; I could see her anxiety, fear and her tears. I wanted to give here courage and love, to melt her apprehension, to let her know everything was just fine. I felt great peace, expansive, radiant, flowing with no circumscribed areas of being. I was a small part of a larger movement of profuse loving energy.

When I was a small child I enjoyed drawing pictures. I preferred that to going outside to play. On my sixteenth birthday, a loving and intuitive aunt gave me an oil painting set. I have been painting ever since, sometimes with less intensity that at other times; almost always living with the image of myself as an artist. In order to make a living, I turned

I feel a sense of urgency swelling within me to focus on the underlying stream and not on the content of my life.

my talents to commercial art but continued to paint pictures whenever time permitted. My paintings changed somewhat as I matured. The real transformation occurred in the process of self-inquiry as to my life as a whole. I reached depths beyond what I had allowed myself to experience before, and within that context, finally accepted the interior summons. It had become more apparent than ever that true peace, equanimity and the understanding of the real purpose of life existed within, not to be found in the changing outside world. During this quest I became aware of an unquenchable thirst for God. Everything I did, including my everyday work, I saw and experienced from a different perspective. In 1973 I became impassioned with the idea of painting my sense of God. I had no conception as to how one painted that sense but it did not seem to matter. The paintings prior to that time were comparatively small but from then on they become large, one as big as seven feet wide. Every moment when free I painted, sometimes through the night. My heart was open to God and each painting deepened the shared experience with God. There were times, while painting, I felt infinite mercy, unlimited love, total acceptance. I felt I had come "home." During those many hours of painting (more than a year) I never felt alone or separate. Truly, the canvases were done through me. In fact, there was no point of reference; there was only the flowing and dissolving movement of being, the color and form on the canvas and the bright and heightened atmosphere within the room. Yes, I heard the call from

Jackie Beckett

this omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient love energy and I have had since then an endless thirst for God.

O God, You art my God, earnestly I seek You,
my soul thirsts for You,
my flesh longs for You,
As in a dry and weary land where no water exists
So have I looked for You in the sanctuary (of my heart)
To see Your power and Your glory.
Psalm 63

It's a hot humid day. The sun plays hide and seek behind the clouds, sometimes coming through with powerful rays of light and heat. I'm sitting in the Mandir (Temple) grounds with thousand of people from all walks of life, from at least twelve or more countries. We are waiting for *darshan* (viewing a holy being). I am in South India at the Ashram called *Prasanthi Nilayam* (The Abode of Peace) waiting for the appearance of Sathya Sai Baba. Suddenly, the atmosphere becomes extremely still and charged; the familiar, slender, orange-robed figure is standing on the veranda. He stops to talk gently to the students of his University, the women's side (men and women sit separately). It seems like he glides across the grounds. He accepts personal correspondence from many of the women, missives of thanks or pleas beseeching his help because of some painful event in their lives. He walks over to a gnarled, twisted little old lady sitting in a wheel chair and speaks to her with tenderness and love. With the now familiar movement of his hand he creates *vibuthi* (sacred ash) which the old lady takes in her mouth. She attempts to do *Padnamaskar* (touch the feet of the holy person) but her poor twisted body cannot bend that far. Without a moment's hesitation, Sai Baba lifts his robe slightly and raises his foot so the woman can touch it. Tears are streaming down her face.

Slowly, he comes towards the men's side. Everyone sits on the ground, but I and others with physical problems are permitted to sit on chairs in a separate part of the area where the men sit. He takes letters from the men, blessing some small children sitting on their father's laps. As he comes closer to where I sit, I can see the extraordinary love and compassion reflected on his face. All physical discomfort evaporates from my body. I feel a palpable wave of love, like a warm soft breeze, wash over me. Tears rush to my eyes. I notice many of the men sitting

near me are also in tears. Baba come towards me. I also had letters from people back in the States who knew I was going to Sai Baba's ashram. He takes the letters from me and runs his thumb over my hand as he does so. He bends over, his eyes level with mine and looks directly at me, in me, through me; I feel totally open and naked before God, cleansed anew by the burning flame of love. There was not Sai Baba, I, and others, there was only a sense of wholeness, of One. Like water, I flowed into the vastness of Infinite Being, felt sustained and carried by this powerful love energy that, "bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things . . . (a) love that never ends" (Corinthians 13.7,8).

In describing these three events it becomes obvious that what they share in common is the experience of something universal, something larger than personal, but which includes the personal. So for myself, although it takes constant practice, I feel a sense of urgency swelling within me to focus on the underlying stream and not on the content of my life. This is what I understand by "unceasing prayer."

This exquisite prayer is taken from the liturgy for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, the most holy days in the Jewish year. In addition to its historic spiritual significance, the prayer contains the secret to ageing in grace and the will of God.

As our flesh diminishes
The space for our soul expands
Yearning to close the distance from the Soul which gave it
birth.

Hungry body, yearning soul
We now approach the *Ne'ilah* gates
Of pardon, purity, and peace.

Look around you.

Those who once were strangers,
Crowding the space we thought our bodies needed,
Have now, as evening falls, become familiars,
Each narrow body spreading wings
On which together we may rise beyond the gates
To join each soul to Soul
Each little space we struggle to preserve
To Space.

When the *Shofar* sounds and this exalting day withdraws
behind the curtain of the night
We shall begin to miss each other's company,
We who crowded out each other's space,
We who filled each other's space with awe.

And so, in these last scenes before the night descends
Let us reach out to touch each other's souls,
That, like God before the lights came up
Upon the first creation,
We might hover over that new day,
That new and holy, pure and radiant, year
For which we hunger,
A year in which we have discovered in a room of strangers
Wings of God.

On
Wings
of Awe
מעלי תפילות

Members of Fellowship in Prayer in 80 countries form a global spiritual community of men and women—many of whom organize groups or correspond with each other in order to share spiritual insights and to pray together. If you would like to hear from or write to people in our Interfaith Network, please send your name and address to us at 291 Witherspoon Street, Princeton, NJ 08542, and we will list it in our next issue.

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BECOMING BREAD: MEDITATIONS ON LOVING AND TRANSFORMATION

by Gunilla Norris, Bell Tower, New York, 1993, 78 pages, hardback, $15.00.

Another lovely and "spiritually useful" book from Bell Tower. The author writes in her preface, "I link the food of the spirit, love, and the food of the body, bread. Both are staples. They sustain us." In profoundly contemplative, very beautiful poems and meditations, she develops the metaphor of making bread to trace the workings of God's love within the depths and breadths of human love. Growth, simplicity, sharing, standing free—the salt of the earth, the staff of life: her themes, like bread, are warm and nourishing.

Reading this book is a prayer. It is a journey so deep into the beauty of the human soul and the life of God that you lose your breath, stunned by the sheer awe of it all. Yes, Gunilla Norris is right,

the kitchen is a holy place—
alive with possibility. *MFG*

A GRADUAL AWAKENING

by Stephen Levine, Anchor Books, Doubleday, New York, 1989, 173 pages, paperback, $6.95.

Stephen Levine, who has worked for years with the terminally ill and actively dying, with prisoners and people suffering from all kinds of loss and trauma, believes in the great power of meditation to open a spacious perspective in "the wanting mind." For him, letting go of "the imaginings of getting what we want" is central to the spiritual life. Since our desires are changing all the time, he writes, none of the things we try to hold onto can offer lasting satisfaction. Endlessly thinking about our wants and needs, desiring and looking for love will never set free the capacity of the human heart for real caring and compassion, the capacity of the "wisdom mind" for knowing and understanding.

Levine's focus on healing through both mindfulness and heartfulness is like a beacon shining on the human condition: it lights the way through despair and suffering toward hope. *MFG*

Thanks for a very stimulating journal.

Richard J. Reece, Managing Editor, Catholic Digest*; Saint Paul, MN*

I enjoy your journal and would like to share with your readers some of the new liturgy I have written:

The process of dying is painful,
especially if it is prolonged,
but death itself is a transition,
a transfer from here to there,
a recycling of the body and soul.
Matter is never destroyed,
only transformed.
So, too, does the soul evolve
higher and higher
from instinct to inspiration
haughtiness to holiness
from selfishness to service
from individualism to union
until it returns home
to the soul of souls—the *ainsof*—the infinite.
Thus is the divine source of life magnified
and sanctified.

Rabbi Allen S. Maller, Temple Akiba; Culver City, CA

I am a Native American of both Mescalero Apache and Lakota Sioux descent and am inside an ironhouse in Virginia. We have four groups of Native Americans in Virginia ironhouses, who have won permission to practice their religious beliefs and customs in prison. Our group is called "Drums:" D for determined, R for Redman, U for unity, M for movement, and S for spirituality. We won our battle through prayer, not through the courts.

I am writing to request a copy of the complete series of articles in *Fellowship in Prayer* entitled "Rock Ritual," by Robert O'Rourke (Vol. 43, Nos. 1-4, and Vol. 44, Nos. 1-6.). We would like to use these articles with our brotherhood and sisterhood as study material for learning about prayer. We would also like to receive your booklet, "Way of Prayer."

I ask you to help me, because I am a firm believer in prayer. Since we

have no Spiritual Advisor here, and since I am a Traditional Pipe Keeper and Sundancer, I serve as the Advisor.

I sincerely thank you.

Charles Thunder Hawk; Dillwyn, VA

I learned about *Fellowship in Prayer* from a Pallottine Sister, S. Gail Boymeyer. I am in the process of discerning a vocation, and S. Gail thought *FiP's* emphasis on prayer and meditation—from a multicultural, world-family point of view—would speak to my personal spirituality.

In the peace of the Creator of all,

Carolyn Dorton; Morristown, TN

Thank you for being in my life!

John L. Bry; Enola, PA

I am a member of the local Unitarian Universalist Church and have a deep and abiding faith in Jesus Christ. But I also feel the importance and worth of other spiritual paths and appreciate the ecumenical nature of *Fellowship in Prayer*. I am particularly glad that you print Native American material, since I feel very strongly with and for our Native Americans.

What keeps me most alive in my church is the music—I direct the choir—and your words are like music to me: they flow beautifully and stir my heart and soul.

Barbara K. Mountcastle; Gulf Breeze, FLA

Fellowship in Prayer gives the world a New Heart.

June Moreau; Lexington, MA

My mother, Mrs. Winnie Lou Ray, is now deceased. For many years, she found comfort in reading *Fellowship in Prayer*. It truly helped her to grow—tremendously—in her spiritual life.

Charlotte Derrough; Asheville, NC

Please renew my subscription to *FiP*. It is thoughtful and personal and reflects the awareness that God and goodness wear many faces and can beckon from varied paths.

My dog, Mischa, and two cats send their best to Angela. They feel that since animals have served as inspiration for stories, it is about time some received credit for authorship.

God bless you; keep up the good work.

Helen R. Lambin; Chicago, IL

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We welcome articles on prayer, meditation, spiritual experience, religious faith or practices, and similar topics. Preference is given to experiential manuscripts. Manuscripts should not exceed 1500 words, should be typed, double spaced, either on 8 ½ by 11 inch paper or on a 5 ¼ inch floppy minidisk, 2S/2D, in WordPerfect and sent to The Editor, Fellowship in Prayer, 291 Witherspoon Street, Princeton, NJ 08542. Please include a biography of no more than five lines.

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